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THE ETHICS OF THEOSOPHY.

(A PAPER READ BY MRS. VARIAN AT THE DUBLIN LODGE.)

ETHICS may be defined as the science of conduct. My object is to show that Theosophy includes all Ethics. The whole tendency of Theosophy is to point the way to the purest and most unselfish life in thought and deed—putting thought first as the cause of action, and as moulding and determining the character to an even greater extent than mere action. None the less is the importance of work insisted upon “Therefore, thy task prescribed, with spirit unattached gladly perform, since in performance of plain duty man mounts to his highest bliss.” And again, “Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.” Any true scheme of life must not only supply us with a reason for right conduct, but with a standard by which to judge our moral position. Such a religion, investing life with infinite possibilities, holding all action and thought to be not merely of passing importance, concerning us no more when we shall have lived one little life here, but acting and reacting on ourselves and others for age after age, through endless rebirths, invests life with a sense of seriousness and solemnity, which grows upon us.

The teaching of the brotherhood of man, and the real unity of each with each, really sums up the whole Ethical question, and gives the reason why it is incumbent on us to live for each other, helpful and sympathising, and at the same time explains the misery, indifference, and sense of isolation that is so prevalent. We are one at heart; all expressions of the divine, differentiated only in form and circumstances; and it is our misunderstanding of this, our effort to break away from each other, to be separate,

to possess things for our own gratification, that causes discord and jarring. We are so inwoven with each other that none can be quite free when any remain bound ; the more nearly perfection is reached, the more keenly is felt the agony of compassion for the weak and miserable ; every thought or deed, good or evil, affects the whole race ; we are not able to trace it, but we know not whether the wrong we see, which fills us with fiery indignation, may not have been set in motion by some wrong-doing of our own in past ages ; we are each responsible while there remains on earth one wrong, one cruelty, one unkindness ; and it is our duty to help, and our glory that we *may* help, "the rolling wheels of this great world."

There is no royal road, no fixed rule or creed, by which we may invariably act ; but each must act by their own sense of right, guided only by love and tolerance. Conventions and creeds are useful only to those who have not yet learned to trust their own intuitional knowledge of right, or who are too weak to stand against the disapproval of others. The ideal character is that which is entirely self-supporting, indifferent to praise or blame, acting from the eternal right within.

When thy firm soul hath shaken off those tangled oracles
Which ignorantly guide ; then shall it soar
To high neglect of what's denied or said
This way or that way in doctrinal writ,
Troubled no longer by the priestly lore,
Safe shall it live, and sure ; steadfastly bent
On meditation ; this is joy, is peace.

Though Theosophy lays down no creed which adherents must follow, still there are lines of thought pointed out to the student, by following which he may arrive at an increasing knowledge of the unity of all life, and the divine in the universe and develop a power of will over desire, which very few of us comprehend, or suspect the possibility of. The very general practice of "doing in Rome as Rome does" is simply a relinquishing of the right and privilege of private judgment. Liberty of person and of conscience is rightly considered to be the dearest possession of the individual, but very few of us have the courage to claim our undoubted right ; we only make-believe to act by our own ideas ; we really are constrained by the ideas of the majority of our associates, and modified by their qualities ; and while this is so, while we act in consonance with the desires or principles of others, we are only reflections of them—false to the divine in ourselves, and necessarily weak and wavering.

In Theosophical literature is indicated the way to strengthen the will, develop the character, and cultivate the higher powers which are latent in all of us—so that we may eradicate the selfish, the ignoble, the changeable and inconstant ; and by first purifying and ennobling ourselves, be fit to help others in their struggle against their lower qualities. It is obvious that we cannot give what we have not got, and it is only in proportion as we have made a quality our own that we can impart it to others.

It is difficult to find an impelling reason for right conduct, apart from the inherent sense of justice, and a belief in justice pervading the universe. It has been asked : "What reason have we to consider that there is universal justice, or any justice, apart from the necessities of social life?" Such a

question seems to predicate a total absence of any reason for action, other than that prompted by desire or fear, and surely every life comes in contact with numberless actions prompted by neither of these. As I understand Theosophy, it teaches that deep in the human heart, underlying the consciousness, is an absolute knowledge of the source from which we spring, and to which we shall return; and the apparent difference in knowledge, The same causes under the same conditions bring forth the same results, happiness, and virtue, merely indicate the stage of the development of the Ego, and these results which we see are the absolutely just effects of the cause which we do not see. The satisfaction of the sense of justice lies in the fact that we only reap what we sow, and will all eventually reach the perfect end.

If we take the best known tenets of Theosophy, and examine them separately, we shall see how they make for the right, so that whoso accepts even isolated points of the Theosophical teaching finds immediately a stronger and deeper necessity for purer life, greater helpfulness to others, and more self-reliance. Theosophy emphatically teaches immortality—not the eternal life of a disembodied soul in some vague Heaven, or vaguer Hell, but an immortality of progress through the human form on the earth on which we dwell. This is our theatre; here we have striven and failed, and striven and conquered; and here we will return again and again, until we have reached a mastery over ourselves, and also over Nature, inconceivable to us now. It is hardly possible to overestimate the strong moral compulsion of such a belief. To know that we are here to become “perfect,” “even as our Father in Heaven is perfect,” and that we must return life after life, age after age, until we have become masters of life, infinite in wisdom and love, stimulates us to greater efforts in self-denial and helpfulness.

The doctrine of reincarnation for the purpose of progression toward perfection, and therefore happiness, takes the horror from the idea of death, and makes it easier for us to face it for those we love, and for ourselves. That frantic fear of death, which many of us feel, robs us of the necessary calmness and steadfastness in times of emergency and danger, and disturbs our whole moral atmosphere.

The tenet spoken of as the law of Karma, approximately the adjustment of effects to causes—which causes we ourselves set in motion; the realisation that our troubles and pains are brought about by our own weakness of character and infirmity of purpose; that it rests with ourselves to correct these faults, and that no one can bring us certain happiness or calm of mind except ourselves, is a great incentive to cultivate self-reliance, rather than dependence on others. It is easier to consider ourselves merely creatures of circumstance or the puppets of a higher power, but surely grander and nobler, to say:—

“It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with circumstances the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.”

And since our moral position must depend upon our sense of responsibility (for

of what use would a moral sense be to an irresponsible being), what a deeper significance all our thoughts and actions take upon themselves when considered as the results of past thoughts and actions, and the causes of future ones.

We sometimes hear objections to Theosophy on the ground that it is a dreamy abstraction, full of a beautiful vagueness, but of no use in practical life. But, on the contrary, Theosophical literature is full of the most lofty Ethical teaching. It holds ever before its votaries the ideal of absolute selflessness; it requires every act, every thought, every movement of mind or body to be under the control of the higher self. It imputes nothing to chance or accident, but shows everything to be the ordered outcome of causes set in motion in the past. And this is why I say that Theosophy includes Ethics. It covers the whole Ethical ground.

I cannot end better than by quoting from the "Song Celestial" the signs of the aspirant to heavenly birth:—

Fearlessness, singleness of soul, the will
Always to strive for wisdom, opened hand,
And governed appetites, and piety,
And love of lonely study, humbleness,
Uprightness, heed to injure nought which lives,
Truthfulness, slowness unto wrath, a mind
That lightly letteth go what others prize;
And equanimity, and charity
Which spieth no man's faults, and tenderness
Toward all that suffer, a contented heart
Fluttered by no desires; a bearing mild,
Modest, and grave, with manhood nobly mixed
With patience, fortitude, and purity;
An unrevengeful spirit, never given
To rate itself to high—such be the signs,
O, Indian Prince, of him whose feet are set
On that fair path, which leads to heavenly birth.

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THE MIDNIGHT BLOSSOM.

"Arhans are born at midnight hour * * * * together with the the holy flower that opes and blooms in darkness."—*The Voice of the Silence.*

WE stood together at the door of our hut: we could see through the gathering gloom where our sheep and goats were cropping the sweet grass on the side of the hill: we were full of drowsy content as they were. We had naught to mar our own happiness—neither memory nor unrest for the future. We lingered on while the vast twilight encircled us; we were one with its dewy stillness. The lustre of the early stars first broke in upon our dreaming: we looked up and around: the yellow constellations began to sing their choral hymn together. As the night deepened they came out swiftly from their hiding places in depths of still and unfathomable blue; they hung in burning clusters; they advanced in multitudes that dazzled: the shadowy shining of night was strewn all over with nebulous dust of silver, with long mists of gold, with jewels of glittering green. We felt how fit a place the earth was to live on, with these nightly glories over us, with silence and coolness upon its lawns and lakes after the consuming day. Valmika, Kedar, I and Ananda watched together;

through the rich gloom we could see far distant forests and lights—the lights of village and city in King Suddhōdana's realm.

"Brothers," said Valmika, "How good it is to be here, and not yonder in the city where they know not peace, even in sleep."

"Yonder and yonder," said Kedar, "I saw the inner air full of a red glow where they were busy in toiling and strife. It seemed to reach up to me; I could not breathe. I climbed the hills at dawn to laugh where the snows were, and the sun is as white as they are white."

"But, brothers, if we went down among them and told them how happy we were, and how the flowers grow on the hillside, and all about the flocks, they would surely come up and leave all sorrow. They cannot know or they would come." Ananda was a mere child though so tall for his years.

"They would not come," said Kedar. "All their joy is to haggle and hoard. When Siva blows upon them with his angry breath they will lament, or when the Prets in fierce hunger devour them."

"It is good to be here," repeated Valmika drowsily, "to mind the flocks and be at rest, and to hear the wise Varunna speak when he comes among us."

I was silent. I knew better than they that busy city which glowed beyond the dark forests. I had lived there until, grown sick and weary, I had gone back to my brothers on the hillside. I wondered would life, indeed, go on ceaselessly until it ended in the pain of the world. I said within myself—Oh, mighty Brahma, on the outermost verges of thy dream are our lives; thou old invisible, how faintly through our hearts comes the sound of thy song, the light of thy glory! Full of yearning to rise and return, I strove to hear in the heart the music Anahata spoken of in our sacred scrolls. There was silence, and then I thought I heard sounds, not glad, a myriad murmur. As I listened it deepened, it grew into passionate prayer and appeal and tears, as if the cry of the long-forgotten souls of men went echoing through empty chambers. My eyes filled with tears, for it seemed world-wide, and to sigh from out many ages, long ago, to be and yet to be.

"Ananda! Ananda! where is the boy running to?" cried Valmika. Ananda had vanished into the gloom. We heard his glad laugh below and then another voice speaking. Presently up loomed the tall figure of Varunna. Ananda held his hand and danced beside him. We knew the Master Yogi, and bowed reverently before him. We could see by the starlight his simple robe of white. I could trace clearly every feature of the grave and beautiful face, the radiant eyes; not by the starlight I saw, but because a silvery shining rayed a little way into the blackness around the dark hair and face. Valmika, as elder, first spake.

"Holy sir, be welcome. Will you come in and rest?"

"I cannot stay now. I must pass over the mountain ere dawn; but you may come a little way with me—such of you as will."

We assented gladly—Kedar and I; Valmika remained. Then Ananda prayed to go. We bade him stay, fearing for him the labour of climbing and the chill of the snows, but Varunna said: "Let the child come; he is hardy; he will not tire if he holds my hand."

So we set out together and faced the highlands that rose and rose above us; we knew well the way even at night. We waited in silence for Varunna to speak, but for nigh two hours we mounted without words, save for Ananda's shouts of delight and wonder at the heavens spread above us. But I was hungry for an answer to my thoughts, so I spake.

“ Master, Valmika was saying, ere you came, how good it was to be here rather than in the city where they are full of strife, and Kedar thought their lives would flow on into fiery pain and no speech would avail. Ananda, speaking as a child indeed, said if one went down among them they would listen to his story of the happy life. But, Master, do not many speak and interpret the sacred writings, and how few they are who lay to heart the words of the gods! They seem, indeed, to go on through desire into pain, and even here upon our hills we are not free, for Kedar felt the hot glow of their passion and I heard in my heart their sobs of despair. Master, it was terrible, for they seemed to come from the wide earth over, and out of ages far away.”

“ There is more of the true in the child's hope than in your despair, for it is of much avail to speak though but a few listen. Better is the life which aids, though in sorrow, than the life which withdraws from pain unto solitude. Yet it is not well to speak without power, for only the knower of Brahma can interpret the sacred writings truly. It is well to be free ere we speak of freedom; then we have power and many hearken.”

“ But who would leave joy for sorrow, and who being one with Brahma may return to give council?”

“ Brother,” said Varunna, “ here is the hope of the world. Though many seek only for the eternal joy, yet the cry you heard has been heard by great ones who have turned backwards, called by these beseeching voices. The small old path stretching far away leads through many wonderful beings to the place of Brahma; there is the first fountain, the world of beautiful silence, the light that has been undimmed since the beginning of time—the joy where life fades into being; but turning backwards, the small old path winds away into the world of men, it enters every sorrowful heart, and the way of him who would tread therethro' is stayed by its pain and barred by its delusion. This is the way the great ones go; they turn with the path from the door of Brahma the warriors and the strong ones: they move along its myriad ways; they overcome darkness with wisdom and pain with compassion. After many conquered worlds, after many races of men, purified and uplifted they go to greater than Brahma. In these, though few, is the hope of the world; these are the heroes for whom, returning, the earth puts forth her signal fires, and the Devas sing their hymns of welcome.”

We paused where the plateau widened out; there was scarce a ripple in the chill air; in quietness the snows glistened, a light reflected from the crores of stars that swung with gay and glittering motion above us. We could hear the immense heart-beat of the world in the stillness; we had thoughts that went ranging through the heavens, not sad, but full of solemn hope.

“ Brothers! Master! Look, the wonderful thing! and another, and yet another!” We heard Ananda calling; we looked and saw the holy blossom—the midnight flower—oh, may the earth again put forth such beauty—it grew up from the snows with leaves of delicate crystal, a nimbus encircled each radiant bloom, a halo pale yet lustrous. I bowed down before it lost in awe. I heard Varunna say:—“ The earth, indeed puts forth her signal fires, and the Devas sing their hymn; listen!” We heard a music as of beautiful thought moving along the high places of the earth, full of infinite love and hope and yearning.

“ Brothers, be glad, for One is born who has chosen the greater way. Now I must pass onwards. Kedar, Narayan, Ananda, farewell! Nay, no further; it is a long way to return, and the child will tire.”

He went on and passed from our sight. But we did not return; we remained long, long in silence, looking at the sacred flower.

* * * * *

Vow, taken long ago, be strong in our hearts to-day. Here where the pain is fiercer, to rest is more sweet. Here where beauty dies away, it is more joy to be lulled in dreams. Here the good, the true, our hope, seem but a madness born of ancient pain. Out of rest, dream, or despair, let us arise. Let us go the way the Great Ones go. Æ.

—:o:—

PESSIMISM, FROM AN OPTIMIST STANDPOINT.

HOWEVER right may appear to many the view of those who consider Pessimism as an unmitigated evil, to others the Pessimistic view of life seems to have its own place in the plan of human progress. For some few people believe in "divine discontent," and feel that an acknowledgment of the predominance of evil in the world marks the saturation point of enjoyment in material pleasures, and that the prevalence of Pessimism is a sure sign that those holding these views are, in the mass, waiting to be shown that the life outside matter (in the gross form known to us) has yet to be explored, and that the prizes it offers are of such a lofty and ennobling nature that words fail to afford a faint conception of them.

Freed themselves from the saddening and enervating influence of unrelieved Pessimistic thought by their broader view of life, of its present objects and future aims, such people welcome discontent in the men and women around them. No one who has not in past lives tasted to the full, in person or by sympathy, the cup of material sensation in its forms of joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, seed-sowing and harvest time, until the imprint of all this past experience is indelibly fixed in both the brain mind, and in the mind of each cell that composes the body, can find time to be Pessimistic. When that point has been reached by a number of persons the *blasé* class appears. Men and women, young and old, often in appearance better qualified to "enjoy life" than their pleasure-loving neighbours, calmly view with bored contempt the race after pleasure going on around them. Often lazily unselfish, and with a vague standard of morals, they go through life without knowing why—a latent force, instead of an active, intelligent power.

In this class are many who can be aided by such a movement as the Theosophical Society, a movement the understanding of which gives a new spring to action, and still permitting them to view calmly, but with increased apprehension of its meaning, their neighbour's struggle for enjoyment, at the same time opens up such a vast new field for investigation that the sixty or seventy years between a birth and death only afford space for the veriest dabbling on the borders of life's wider interests.

Another, more pronounced, class of pessimist who declares that too much evil prevails in the world to make life worth the pain of living in the midst of such wrong, deceit and suffering, are harder to help, because they often literally hug their painful belief and refuse to perceive the wider hope. But if it can be shown to them that the seeming unmerrited pain, from which they revolt, is only as the pain of the spur urging on to quicker movement, that they may the more swiftly force their way through the barrier raised by selfish thought around them,

out into the broader, grander, life of thought and action, blended with the thought and action of their fellow men, then they will be glad of the pain that pricked them on, and they will look with tender understanding eyes on those who are yet suffering as they once suffered, and with all the freedom and power gained by that past suffering, they will stretch out strong helping hands to make their comrades *feel* the truth they cannot yet perceive, and, by their lives and by their words, seek to make known to all the world, that every man and woman may come into contact with it, the wider knowledge and the larger hope.

Psy.

—:o:—

THE STUDY OF HYPNOTISM.

“A PARABLE” AND TWO “FABLES.”

WHEN many years ago I made up my mind to enter seriously into the study of Occultism, I long hesitated as to which part of the great Whole it would be best to commence with; should I begin by investigating Spiritualism, or Astrology, or Mesmerism, or any other branch?

If Eliphas Levi, the greatest Kabbalist of this century, had still been alive, I could have gone to seek advice; but his sublime spirit had, a few years before, passed to the next stage of its eternal progress.

I thought that perhaps his friend, Louis Desbarolles would help me, and having obtained an introduction from a mutual acquaintance, I had the pleasure of an interview with the celebrated Chiromancist, who received me with his usual kindness.

After he had heard of my perplexity: “My young friend,” said Desbarolles, “I see you are in earnest, and I need not remind you that you are entering the most serious of studies, and I may add, a life-long one. I feel confident that the advice I am going to give you, if you follow it, will save you from many pitfalls and from much disappointment.”

“In order to impress it upon you more forcibly, I shall give it in an allegorical form, and shall therefore ask you to picture in your own mind one of these Eastern Palaces, which consist solely of ground-floor rooms, opening into a central courtyard.”

“From the outside, no window is to be seen, and you can only gain admittance through a few narrow doorways.”

“All the light inside the Palace should come from that central, roofless courtyard, which is protected from the sun-rays by a large cloth blind of several colours. But the cloth is so thick that the courtyard and the chambers opening into it are in semi-darkness; and the little light which filters through the blind, partaking of its various hues, gives unreal and false colours to everything within.

“That Palace is called ‘Occultism.’ Each of its numerous chambers has a different name; one is called ‘Astrology,’ another ‘Chiromancy,’ another ‘Spiritualism,’ and so on; the central courtyard is called ‘Hypnotism,’ and the sunblind’s name is ‘Mesmerism.’

“Some of these rooms are empty, others contain beautiful things. If you look around you may perceive a few of them, but the colourings thrown upon the contents through the sunblind are false, and the semi-darkness and your imagination helping, their shapes will appear fanciful and fantastic; you will see things where there are none, and fail to see anything where there are plenty.

. . . . Well, my young friend, if you were in that Palace, and wished to find out the real from the unreal, what would you do?" "I should go into the courtyard, pull down the sunblind, and let the sunlight in!" . . . "That is, indeed, the best advice I can give you; but you will not find it so easy to follow, as the sunblind has been up for many years, and will require tearing piece by piece."

"However, a few clear sighted men have been at that work for some years past; Braid in Manchester, Azam in Bordeaux, Charcot in Paris, Liebault in Nancy; the latter especially has been successful; go, and join them, step boldly into that courtyard, help them to tear off that deceitful blind called mesmerism, and allow the clear sunlight of truth to fill the courtyard. When that is done, study carefully the contents of the courtyard called Hypnotism, before you attempt entering the other rooms which, as they are so large, will perhaps still remain rather dark, but at least, to your eyes the false colours will have vanished and also the shadows."

I heartily thanked Monsieur Desbarolles and followed his advice. For fifteen years I have remained in that courtyard; the blind has long been torn into shreds, and I have had many a peep into the rooms.

The tearing of the blind proved so hard a work, and afterwards the studying of the courtyard's contents took so long, that I have never yet found time to penetrate each room thoroughly, but a great deal of their contents can be seen from the courtyard, and some day I intend writing an account of some of my experiences in that marvellous palace.

Already, in my lectures, I have described the wonderful *coup de theatre* at the fall of the blind, the unexpected change of scenery in the courtyard, the flight of the shadows at the entrance of light, the sudden disappearance of the so-called "Animal Magnetism," "Odic Force," "Will-Transfer," the transformation of the whole scarecrow of Mesmeric Power (? ?) into one single, simple, real, tangible, and yet tremendous power called "suggestion," and the so-called Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Prevision, etc., understood at last as hyperaesthesia of the senses.

But all this concerns solely the courtyard, and the results in the rooms have yet to be told, as they cannot be entirely known before the end of the century; for many of these rooms are full of early investigators who, having spent a lifetime in describing the shadows and explaining the non-existent, are not anxious to admit the light, and to suddenly perceive their room—empty, or perhaps full of realities always denied before; stern realities those; and some of them bearing unpleasant names, such as Fraud, Illusion, Hallucination, and Madness.

Also, what a hatred has gradually sprung up against the tearers of the sun-blind!! From every room the same speech is heard:—"Friends, this light is dazzling, let us seize the few rags left of the sun-blind, and nail them at the entrance of our room."

"This light is unhealthy! This light is dangerous! Friends, if we admit it we shall become crazy!"

Such are the accusations now levelled at Hypnotism!

We understand their motives! and we do not trouble to answer them!!

But the leaders of the Theosophical Society cannot be suspected of having such motives, and when we hear Mrs. Annie Besant discountenancing altogether the use of Hypnotism, the fact becomes at once worthy of our consideration, for no

one who knows the high-minded lady can doubt that she is speaking in good faith, and that her sole motive for condemning the use of this Power is the fear of its possible dangers and abuse.

Nevertheless, as I also firmly believe that "there is no religion higher than truth," I hope it will not be deemed too bold on my part if I, in equally good faith, venture to protest in this periodical against such wholesale condemnation of Hypnotism.

No one who has studied the subject can deny that Hypnotism may, indeed, become a very dangerous weapon in the hands of the ignorant or the evil-minded, and that every "*reasonable*" restriction should therefore be placed by law against the possible "*abuse*" of this power; but I contend that the cautious "*use*" of Hypnotism by those who have taken care of previously studying its phenomena, is not only perfectly harmless, but in many cases highly beneficial to the patient, and this has been proved by the large number of medical men who have practiced it during the last twenty years.

I further contend that the immense amount of good which can be done, and *is done*, every day, by the proper use of Hypnotism, such as, for instance, the relief of pain, the cure of many dreadful mental and nervous complaints *not otherwise curable*, the checking of evil and vicious tendencies in children, and of intemperance in all its worse forms in adults, greatly outweighs the possible harm which could be so easily prevented.

Indeed, I may add that, in my opinion, after what I have seen of Hypnotism during fifteen years' practice, I consider that anyone who "knowingly" condemns its "proper" use, and therefore endeavours to deprive humanity of such a boon, is taking a terrible moral responsibility, and I am prepared to prove that my opinion is shared by hundreds of medical men in every country.

I cannot help thinking that in this case it is only an incomplete knowledge of Hypnotism which has led the present leaders of the Theosophical Society to such a surprising conclusion, and I am all the more inclined to think so when I remember that the late Madame Blavatsky certainly held no such opinion, and that I had the pleasure of witnessing in her own house some of the most interesting Hypnotic experiments I have ever seen.

In fact, she agreed with me in the belief that Hypnotism can be of immense help in demonstrating experimentally many of the Truths of Theosophy, such as for instance, the various states of consciousness and the increase of memory in direct proportion with the depth of the sleep.

As an outsider I have, of course, no right nor power, nor desire to judge the reasons why, since the regretted death of its originator, the T.S. has discountenanced every kind of experimental investigation, even, I believe, among its Inner Circle; and all I wish to say is that having, during fifteen years' practice of Hypnotism, so often succeeded in conclusively proving by comparatively easy hypnotic experiments, the undeniable veracity of many principles of Theosophy, I sincerely regret the systematic antipathy against a science which could prove of such valuable help to Theosophy, and I repeat that the reasons given for such an antipathy are based upon an insufficient practical knowledge of the subject.

We all know that experimental ground is generally very uncertain and very slippery, but I have long since recognised that if the experiments are made upon the solid basis of a reality, such as Hypnotism, that ground is always the best in the end to stand upon, and I often succeed in conclusively proving in five minutes, by actual experiments, facts which would still be doubted after a two hours' lecture.

Besides, it is a mistake to forget that there is such a strong tendency in all human beings to transform thoughts into actions, that there always comes a time in the life of every earnest student of Occultism, when he begins to feel an uncontrollable desire to leave all "theories" aside for a time, and to enter into "practice;" a longing to prove by actual experiments, firstly to himself, and afterwards to the world at large, that the Occult really exists, and can be demonstrated to all in a tangible way.

"My kingdom for a horse," once said a king of England! "My fortune to see a ghost!" said a gentleman to me not long ago who was by no means a sceptic with regard to the existence of "spooks," but who after studying for many years in books, the phenomena of Borderland, had at last felt a desire "to read a little less and to see a little more."

As it happened, I succeeded in that instance in gratifying his wish (it was done, of course, under Hypnotic Hallucination), and he was delighted to see at last, the long wished for "spook," and still more afterwards, I believe, in finding that I did not claim the promised fortune.

To conclude this perhaps already too long digression, the best advice I can give to those anxious to investigate Occultism is the same which I myself received so many years ago. Always remember that real Hypnotism is as different from mesmerism as English is from Greek, and begin by a careful study of Hypnotism and its phenomena, specially Hypnotic Hallucinations, illusions and post Hypnotic suggestions. This should undoubtedly be the entrance "courtyard" of the wonderful "Palace" called Occultism, for it is only to those who have passed through that "courtyard" that the contents of the rooms assume their real shapes. And in order to render it more easy for my reader to remember this advice I shall conclude by illustrating it in the two following fables:—

Once upon a time there was a monkey whose master used to make a living by showing the magic lantern in village fairs. That monkey used to sit night after night, during the performance, watching his master, listening to his speech, and thinking to himself that there was, after all, nothing so difficult nor so clever in such a performance, and he felt confident that he could give, at any time, a much better show and a much cleverer speech (for this occurred in the days when animals could talk).

So it happened that one day his master being taken suddenly ill, the monkey eagerly took the opportunity of giving the performance in his stead. The speech was, indeed, highly satisfactory:—"See, ladies and gentlemen, this magnificent view represents the Boulevards of gay Paris *at night*." And the audience applauded, thinking it was a joke, for no view was really to be seen. "This other fine sight is that of the city of Constantinople a little after sunrise." And the villagers kept on rubbing their eyes, for the canvas still remained quite dark as description after description followed, until at last they got angry, and began wrecking the place, nearly killing the unfortunate monkey, who remembered too late that he had forgotten but one, small, but vital point, which was to light the lamps of the magic lantern before commencing, without which all remained dark.

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Once upon a time in the good city of London there was a society called the Psychical Research Society, formed to collect together, and investigate, all the most remarkable occurrences and appearances which took place in Great Britain, and which could not be explained by any of the acknowledged sciences.

Year after year the reports of that society were full of marvellous reports of unexplainable events, and the general public, who could see nothing, kept on applauding, although scientists went on laughing.

And year by year the occurrences became more and more extraordinary, and the outsiders kept on rubbing their eyes, although some of the gifted members of that society succeeded in explaining many of these remarkable occurrences by some still more remarkable and unheard of theories; and yet, scientists (Hypnotists specially), kept on laughing!!

Until at last one day some bold member of that learned society, being weary of rubbing his eyes, ventured to respectfully suggest that, perhaps, some small unimportant point might have been neglected from the commencement.

And in the year, 1894, the astounding news came upon the world that the P.R.S. had formed a committee "to begin" the investigation of Hypnotism (one of these official and acknowledged sciences which is of so little value). And everyone shall now join in the laughter.

They had only forgotten during thirty years to light the lamp of their magic lantern!!

GEORGE ANDRE.

We invite replies to Dr. André's Article.—ED.

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IS THE ILLUSION OF DEVACHAN NECESSARY?

THIS question is very often asked by young students of Theosophy, and before I try to answer it I will explain the meaning of the word Devachan, so often occurring in Theosophical literature. Devachan, or more correctly, Devachana or Devayanah, is a word derived from the Sanskrit, and means literally the *dwelling of the gods* (corresponding thus to the Christian's idea of "heaven,") although it is not, strictly speaking, a place or locality, but a state or condition of subjective consciousness, which in no way can be called an illusion when we remember that the unseen or subjective is *the real*, and the objective only a fleeting, perishable shadow.

When what we call *death* comes, the body is dissolved, *i.e.*, the energising life-principle, which in Sanskrit is called *Prana*, is withdrawn, and does not longer hold together the innumerable little lives or microbes that constitute our physical body; but these are allowed to run their own way, and decay sets in.

Now what in the Christian Church is called Soul, among Theosophists *the Triad*, or three higher immortal principles (Atma, Buddhi, Manas) cannot immediately after death enter heaven or Devachan for the following reason:—Closely allied to the physical body (*sthula sarira*) is the astral or ethereal body (*linga sarira*) the exact counterpart of the physical and no less material than this, although built of molecules. United to this is the body of desires (*kama rupa*), earthly longings, and fleshly appetites, the animal part of man, and the stronger these are the longer time it takes before they fade away and disentangle themselves from the immortal Triad, which alone enters Devachan to there assimilate the experiences gathered during the last earth-life, and await in the subjective world the next descent into matter. These periods of activity and rest—cycles of subjectivity and objectivity—is a divine law which runs through all nature, for longer or shorter duration, from the immense period of years that constitute what is called a day and night of Brâhm, or the mani-

festation and withdrawal of the objective universe, to the birth and so-called death of living beings and their days of activity and nights of rest.

"When a long life on the earth-plane has been lived," says Mrs. Annie Besant in her excellent book, "Reincarnation"* "and a store of experiences has been gathered, longing for physical existence is satiated for the time, and the desire turns towards rest. Then comes the interval of disembodiment, during which the Ego, re-entering, as it were, into himself, ceases to energize externally on the physical plane, and bends all his energies to internal activities, reviewing his gathered store of experience, the harvest of the earth-life just closed, separating and classifying them, assimilating what is capable of assimilation, rejecting what is effete and useless. This is the work of the Devachanic period, the necessary time for assimilation, for gaining equilibrium. As a workman may go out and gather the materials for his work, and, having collected them, may return home, sort and arrange them, and then proceed to make from them some artistic and serviceable object, so the *Thinker* (Manas) having gathered his store of materials from life's experiences, must weave them into the web of his millennial existence. He can no more be always busied in the whirl of earth-life than a workman can always be gathering store of materials, and never fabricating them from goods; or than a man can always be eating food, and never digesting it and assimilating it to build up the tissues of his body. This, with the rest needed between periods of activity by all forms of being, makes Devachan an absolute necessity, and rebukes the impatience with which ill-instructed Theosophists chafe against the idea of thus 'wasting time.' The rest itself is a thing, be it remembered, that we cannot do without. The tired and worn-out Manas (the thinking Ego) needs it, and it is only the now rested Ego that is ready and fit for Reincarnation. We have not the energy needed for taking up the burden of the flesh again until this period of refreshment has enabled the forces of life, mental and spiritual, to store themselves up once more in the spiritual man.

It is only at the approaching close of the cycle of re-births that the Ego, grown strong by his milleniums of experience, is able to gird himself for the awful strain of his last swiftly-recurring lives, without Devachanic break, "scaling those last seven steps of the ladder of existence with the tireless muscles hardened by the long ascent that lies behind."

We have been told that "immediate re-birth is for those who are always working with their heart on Master's work and free from self-interest." And when have we reached this point? When we can answer yes to the question put by the Master: "Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind? For as the sacred river's roaring voice, whereby all nature's sounds are echoed back, so must the heart of him who in the stream would enter, thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes.†

ELIN M. C. WHITE, F.T.S.

* Jyn. 52, 53.

† Voice of the Silence.

GLEANINGS FROM THEOSOPHICAL LITERATURE.

* * * All who have time and opportunity are invited to send selections on the subject chosen for each month. These will be arranged and appear under this heading.

Subject for July—"The Potency of Sound" (continued).

THE POTENCY OF SOUND.

THE "Army of the Voice" is a term closely connected with the mystery of Sound and Speech, as an effect and corollary of the cause—Divine Thought. As beautifully expressed by P. Christian: "To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present: the magnetic potency of the human speech is the commencement of every manifestation in the Occult World. The word (Verbum) or the speech of every man is, quite unconsciously to himself, a BLESSING or a CURSE."—H.P.B. *Secret Doctrine*. Vol. i., 93.

All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in* by the modern "sages." Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients; and because such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted.—*Ibid.* Vol. i., 307.

The *magic* of the ancient priests consisted, in those days, in addressing *their gods in their own language*. "The speech of the men of the South cannot reach the Lords. Each must be addressed in the language of his respective element. This element language is composed of *sounds*, not words; of sounds, numbers, and figures. He who knows how to blend the three will call forth the response of the superintending Power (the regent-god of the specific element needed). Thus this "language" is that of *incantations* or of Mantras, as they are called in India, sound being *the most potent and effectual magic agent, and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between Mortals and Immortals*.—*Ibid.* Vol. i., 465.

Space is the first entity. . . . Now space (Akâsa, or the noumenon of Ether) has one quality. . . . And that is sound only. The seven notes of the scale are the principles of sound.—*Ibid.* Vol. i., 534.

SOUND. . . . is a tremendous occult power. . . . It may be produced of such a nature that the pyramid of Cheops would be raised in the air, or that a dying man, nay, one at his last breath, would be revived and filled with new energy and vigour. For sound generates, or rather attracts together the elements that produce an *ozone*, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. It may even *resurrect* a man or an animal whose astral "vital body" has not been irreparably separated from the physical body by the severance of the magnetic or odic chord. As one *thrice saved from death* by that power, the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it. *Ibid.* Vol. i., 555.

"Om" is considered by the ancient Hindu philosophers, as an "Elixir of Sound" which, on being pronounced properly, hinges an undying immortal principle in man on to a corresponding principle in nature. A.N.S. *Indian Section Branch Paper*. XIII.

(To be Continued.)

IMMORTALITY.

We must pass like smoke, or live within the spirits' fire ;
 For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return.
 If our thought has changed to dream, or will into desire,
 As smoke we vanish o'er the fires that burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the grey dusk of our days ;
 Surely here is soul ; with it we have eternal breath ;
 In the fire of love we live or pass by many ways,
 By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

G.W.R.

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LOTUS CIRCLE.

TO THE EDITOR, IRISH THEOSOPHIST.

Ponsonby Cottage,
 Auckland N.Z.,

19th May, 1894.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—Mrs. Cooper-Oakley sent me three or four copies of the *I.T.* and we were very much interested in the "Lotus Circle" work, and at a meeting held in my house, a number of us decided to inaugurate the same thing here, and commence to-morrow. In addition to our Lodge meetings, we hold a Theosophical Reception every Saturday evening at home, and at several of these have read some of the articles in the *I.T.*

Will you please send us a copy to the above address regularly for the Branch, and a note of the subscription to the colonies, when I will forward P.O.O.

If there is anything we of "Brighter Britain" can do to aid you by notes, etc., just let me know.—Yours fraternally,

W. H. DRAFFIN,
 Hon. Sec. Auckland T.S.

[We welcome Bro. Draffin's letter, and shall at all times be glad to make room for news of "Lotus Circle," or general T.S. work, in "Brighter Britain."—ED.]

A NEW ZEALAND LOTUS CIRCLE.

For some time past several members of the Auckland (New Zealand) Branch of the Theosophical Society have been considering the best way of reaching the youth growing up amongst us, so as to impart to them some knowledge of the principles of Theosophy ; and at a Theosophic "At Home," held at Mr. Draffin's on May 12, the question was taken into serious consideration. Several papers relating to the establishment of Lotus Circles, which have been published in *THE IRISH THEOSOPHIST*, were read and discussed, and though it was generally admitted that there were many differences in the condition of children in the Colonies as compared with children at home, it was thought that, as the Lotus Circle scheme was now being so vigorously started in America and Britain, it would be wise to follow in the same direction. By so doing, whatever currents of thought and sympathy are flowing in this direction will no doubt be shared by us to some extent, even though we are at the opposite side of the globe from the spheres of activity now established.

The result of the meeting was that it was decided to form a Lotus Circle, and several members have agreed to take charge of it for a month at a time until it is seen how the movement will meet with public sympathy. If more attend than would be convenient for one class, then other teachers will be forthcoming, and a classification of the scholars be made. At present we are but a small community, and the families of several of our members have already attained to the estate of manhood and womanhood, so that but a limited number of children are obtainable within our non-membership. A few months will show how our effort is to be appreciated, for now that the work has been resolved upon, it will have a fair and earnest trial.

THE MASTERS.

(A Paper by a Young Member of the Lotus Circle.)

The masters are those of us who have reached a state of spiritual perfection by their great endeavours, and they have command over both the spiritual and physical worlds. But when they became fit to pass into Nirvana, and thereby to lose all connection with humanity, so great was their love, or rather pity for it, that they chose to come back and help their stumbling brethren.

This is the greatest and noblest deed to which an adept can aspire; and those who have made this sacrifice live among us at present as Masters or "Mahatmas." A great many people doubt, and a still greater number deny the existence of Mahatmas. But no one who admits reincarnation can deny the logical necessity of Mahatmas, because without such beings what has become of the reincarnations of such philosophers and teachers as Confucius, Buddha, Christ, and many others, some of whom would undoubtedly have lived again. No one of course would assert that those great teachers lived again in the bodies of our present philosophers. So Mahatmas are as necessary to reincarnation as reincarnation is to progress. It is objected also by some that if there are these Mahatmas who possess such wonderful powers, why do they not exhibit them, and in this way almost compel people to believe in them. But even the little we have heard of their great power has been mocked at and set down as mere conjuring. Others, again, ask why the Mahatmas who are the great teachers do not proclaim their teachings from the housetops. But they must remember that it is proverbially folly "to cast pearls before swine." The initiative must be taken by the seeker for knowledge, and he will find the masters always ready. For they look upon humanity as a great river, and its wavelets represent those who, striving upwards, reach a higher point than their fellows, and as these wavelets sparkle in the sunshine and absorb the light, so those more advanced bask in the light of knowledge, and drink in its pleasant rays.

"CARNATION."

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DUBLIN LODGE,

3 UPPER ELY PLACE.

The Monday evening group continues the systematic study of *Patanjali*, and is well supported by the members.

The Friday evening group, intended for more elementary work, has taken up No. 3 Manual, by Annie Besant, *Death and After*. This group is open to all inquiring into Theosophy and the broad teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy. It meets from 8.30 to 9.30 p.m.

FRED. J. DICK, *Hon. Sec.*